

EDITORIAL

This is the tenth year of the existence of *AJISS*. Starting from a publication schedule of twice a year in 1984 to three times a year in 1989, it became a desk-topped quarterly in 1993. In 1992, due to increased demand, we began printing *AJISS* simultaneously in Washington, DC, and Malaysia. This year, it will also be published in Pakistan as well as translated into Turkish in Turkey, *in shā Allāh*. We are grateful to Almighty Allah for our widespread readership and for the contributions sent from around the globe.

In this issue, we feature two articles on various theoretical aspects of the Islamization of knowledge. The first one, by Ibrahim A. Ragab, discusses theory building in the Islamic social sciences. He argues for an alternative social science framework based on the Islamization paradigm, which he asserts could integrate both empirical and nonempirical elements of behavior into a united system of explanation. Exploring the possibility of using knowledge derived from revelation as a major source in the process of theory building, he encourages Muslim social scientists to draw upon the rich insights derived from the transcendental sources, but only after subjecting the resulting propositions to stringent verification. Ragab assures us that this new model rejects unwanted dogmatism, unwarranted exclusiveness, and a parochiality that shuns anything that comes by way of non-Muslims. Muslim social scientists, he opines, will have to reorient their critical approach to their disciplines and also acquire a better understanding of the religious sciences: revealed knowledge. This would ensure a Muslim contribution in the social sciences, a contribution that disappeared during centuries of stagnation in the Islamic ummah.

In the second paper, Louay Safi examines the progress of the Islamization of knowledge project over the last decade. He outlines the general framework, analyzes the work of its proponents and critics (al Fārūqī, al Būṭī, Rahman, 'AbuSulaymān, Arif, Umziyān, Abul-Fadl), and proposes modifications aimed at overcoming the difficulties inherent in the original plan. Safi makes it clear at the outset that even though the production of

Islamized knowledge depends on the application of methods rooted in the Islamic worldview, this does not necessarily mean that the articulation of an Islamic methodology must come before the production of a substantive literature. The production of university textbooks, a fruit of the Islamization of knowledge, may be described as tentatively Islamized knowledge. The Islamicity of this knowledge, Safi asserts, can be confirmed only through the involvement of the Islamic scientific community.

Safi describes the present situation as a premethodological stage. In other words, what we need now is a serious and profound encounter with the methodological approaches generated by traditional Muslim and modern Western scholarship. In this encounter, Muslim scholars will have to explore the rules for a) deriving social concepts and categories from revealed sources; b) deriving concepts and categories from empirical sources; c) the differentiation and stratification of concepts and categories derived from both revealed and empirical sources; and d) linking revealed concepts and categories with empirical ones.

Muhammad Karbal has analyzed some important Western works on the current Islamic resurgence in the Arab world. According to him, the authors of most of these works have written about this topic from perspectives that reflect their own personal biases and lack of objectivity. Karbal analyzes these writings critically and tries to point out the real causes of this phenomenon. He suggests several causes and factors for it and cautions those involved in its study to bear certain information in mind before drawing any conclusions. Due to the issue's complexity, he maintains, any approach must be comprehensive and objective in its intent. The researcher must break away from personal limitations and open windows of light on emerging developments free of all personal or ethnocultural biases.

Samory Rashid recalls how the closing line of Malcolm X's autobiography prompted him to investigate and later revert to Islam in 1967. The enduring popularity of Malcolm X was quite evident when Spike Lee's motion picture "Malcolm X" was released nationwide in 1992. Before, during, and even after this event, enough copies of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* were sold to get it listed in the *New York Times* best-seller list during 1992.

In his paper, Rashid explores a usually ignored aspect of Malcolm X's life: his role as a Muslim leader. He stresses the following points: a) The centrality of Islam in Malcolm X's message; b) the role of Islam as a method of analysis and instrument of change; c) the significance of Islam as a vehicle of political mobilization; d) The influence of hajj on Malcolm X; and e) The role of Islam as a facilitator of alliance with Muslims and others struggling for freedom, justice, and equality.

Muhammed-Shahid Ebrahim and Zafar A. Hasan focus on the modeling of equity participating mortgages in the United States. Such an exercise is necessary, they assert, to satisfy the moral tenets of Islam and expand the pool of real estate investors by circumventing entry constraints inherent in the American tax code. They believe that equity participating mortgages, a relatively recent innovation in real estate financing, are sure to become more popular among Muslims and non-Muslims as people become more aware of the opportunities such mortgages present.

Sohail Hashmi proposes to examine the role of ethical imperatives and constraints on international relations. Basing his study on classical as well as modern Islamic theory, he seeks to evaluate critically both the underlying Islamic perspectives on international relations and to develop systematically an Islamic ethical framework for issues still largely neglected by modern Muslim theorists: just war, the morality of nuclear deterrence, and distributive justice. As these are all pressing issues of our time, issues that often seem to defy any final solution or agreement, the value of such an undertaking is self-evident. We present it here in the hopes that our readers will take it upon themselves to respond with their suggestions and perspectives to further enrich the project.

Marcia (Mujahidah) K. Hermansen has surveyed for us the trends in Islamic studies in the United States and Canada since the 1970s, a period characterized by an extraordinary interest in Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim world. Hermansen, a Ph.D. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from the University of Chicago, has herself been in the forefront of the field of Islamic studies during this period. The works mentioned in both the body of her paper and in her bibliography will provide our readers interested in these fields, both professionally and personally, with a valuable resource to pursue their various interests.

The three book reviews chosen for this issue are geared more to bringing to the notice of our readers the publication of informative and important source materials, rather than for providing a critical analysis of their contents. We feel that Muslim social scientists would benefit from how a German diplomat has come to appreciate Islam, and how an American scholar challenges the established views of Islam in the West, questions widely shared axioms, and demands objectivity and fairness in both scholarship and journalism. The third book gives us an overview of how the discipline of sociology has developed in Iran and how the Islamization of sociology has progressed. As we are interested in both the theory of Islamization as well as its application in specific instances—there has not been much literature dealing with such case studies—we felt that this book would be of great practical value to those involved in the process of Islamizing their disciplines.

We also include in this issue an address delivered by Tāhā J. al ‘Alwānī on civilizational bias. His main contention is that the Islamization of knowledge must proceed in order to counter the West’s self-proclaimed universality of its thought and culture or, in other words, the perceived irrelevancy and uselessness of all non-Western, including Islamic, thought and culture. Ebtihaj Al-A‘li’s account of a Canadian conference dealing with knowledge across cultures should be of special interest, as this is an issue that confronts all of us directly. Ann (Asma) Sofie Roald has provided a report on a conference held recently in Denmark to review what is going on in Middle East studies in Scandinavia.

Once again we have fifteen abstracts of doctoral dissertations and theses of interest to us as Muslim social scientists. We are glad that more and more researchers are choosing topics of importance to the ummah.

Sayyid M. Syeed

